

March 17th, 2019, 2nd Week of Lent, Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18, Phil 3:17-4:1, Luke 9:28-36

Peter, James, and John are witnesses to the Transfiguration of Christ, on the mountain. If you look at pictures of this mountain, Mount Tabor, it's as if its purpose is to display whatever is on top - like a lamp stand acts to display the light of the lamp. Jesus, the true light of the world, transfigured in prayer, reveals His glory to the three who do not know what to make of it. Peter wants to build a type of memorial for this monumental event to give honor to Elijah the great prophet, Moses the law giver, and Jesus the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. God had *other* plans. Peter, who eventually becomes St. Peter, is off key with the **God's will** and is interrupted by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and the Divine Voice: "This is my chosen Son, *listen to Him.*"

Why listen to Him? When we listen to God's beloved Son we hear a message of hope. Christ's transfiguration, a prelude to the resurrection, illuminates our minds and hearts to the reality of the resurrection – life after death. God's transforming power brings to our lives the realization that there is more to life than meets the eye - that God is bigger than the temporal world He created, and that He promises that we will be like Him. As St. Paul says in the second reading, "Jesus will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to Himself."

Why listen to Him? Even though it will be challenging at times, it will bring a multitude of blessings. The first reading says, "I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession." Abraham listened and trusted and God blessed Abraham's faithfulness. Now his descendents are as numerous as the stars (Hebrews 11:12).

Why listen to Him? We imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary, who at a very young age, listened to God and gave her fiat - her yes to God, so that through her Son, Jesus the Savior, the world might know God's mercy, love, and redemption.

Why listen to Him? We will hear Him say "I love you." This experience stirs within us a noble desire to love others, to do good for others. Someone said when you think more about others than about yourself, you know you're on the right path. To illustrate this point, my wife and I have a practical tool that a spiritual director gave us to help us be better listeners for each other. He said, "Come up with a word that when you hear it means, dear, I need to speak with you but it can wait for a more opportune time." Our word for this is "badak", the Indonesian

word for rhinoceros. He also said, “Come up with a word that means, dear, I need to speak with you right now.” Our word for this is “gajah”, Indonesian for elephant.” He said do not over use the word you use for “right now.” When we become better listeners, we show the other that they are important to us – that we love them. Listening is an act of love for the other. When has God challenged you to be a better listener?

When on the mountain, it’s as if Peter is “just fine” where he’s at, but God had *other* plans. After the transfiguration, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John down the mountain to the valley below. *At times*, Jesus calls us to be like Him and to descend to the valley below. Like Peter, we are tempted to stay a bit longer on the mountain.

As Jesus will tell Peter, James, and John in the garden of Gethsemane at the beginning of His Passion, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Listening to God does not come without challenges. Yes, at times we stumble; however, he assures us, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.” (Psalm 23:4)

How is God with us? He is present in the community; He is present in our friends and family; He is present in the world - God is not limited by space and time; and, this side of heaven, he is most substantially present in the Holy Eucharist. His Real and substantial Presence in the Eucharist can only be understood through experience, through theological insight, and having faith in the words of Jesus, Himself. He says, “This *is* my body” and “This *is* my blood...” It is the risen and glorified Christ (the same one who passed through locked doors after the resurrection) that is present in the Eucharist.

Jesus taught the disciples at the Last Supper to “Do this in remembrance of me.” Like at the Transfiguration, Jesus *re-presents* Himself in the Eucharist with His whole self, to transform us not only to be united with Him but to *be* Him, to be His hands and feet; His heart for others.

Listening to God will bring a multitude of blessings. Sure, listening to God will at times be challenging, but He assures us that He loves us and will never abandon us. And, God attributed Abraham’s faithfulness as righteousness, if we are faithful to Him, it will be attributed to us as righteousness.

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